



State of Connecticut

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*Testimony by Representative John Shaban
Before the Government, Administration and Elections Committee
On House Bill 5289
February 22, 2013*

Good morning Chairmen Musto and Jutila, Ranking Members McLachlan and Hwang, and members of the Government, Administration and Election Committee. I am Representative Shaban and I would like to thank this committee for letting me present my testimony in support of House Bill 5289, AN ACT CONCERNING THE TIMING OF CERTAIN SPECIAL MUNICIPAL ELECTIONS.

Last November the Town of Easton was forced to run two elections within two weeks.

The events that triggered this situation started with the October 2011 death of Easton's Treasurer. The vacancy was filled by Ms. Christine Calvert, who was then elected to a full term at the Nov. 2011 municipal elections. In May 2012, however, Easton's tax collector resigned and moved out of town. Ms. Calvert was then appointed as tax collector (which is a full-time position and pays more), and Ms. Wendy Bowditch was appointed by the Board of Selectmen as interim town treasurer in June. The assumption was that she would serve until the November 2013 municipal elections. Soon after Bowditch's appointment, however, two Easton citizens successfully petitioned for an immediate special election for treasurer.

Because of the strict timing requirements under existing state law, that special election could not be joined with the upcoming "regular" election, thus forcing the town to incur the expense and effort of organizing and running an election on Friday October 26 – only to do so again two weeks later.

HB 5289 would amend Conn Gen Stat §9-164 to provide the Secretary of the State with the discretion to permit the joinder of a special municipal election with an upcoming regular election if the special municipal election falls within thirty days of the regular election.

The measure is designed to save money, time and expense, while preserving citizens' rights to petition for a special election. Thank you for allowing me to testify on House Bill 5289 and I urge your support for this common sense measure.

Sincerely,

Rep. John Shaban